



ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

29 JANUARY 2024

REPORT TITLE	PLACES FOR PEOPLE STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT OF ACTIVE TRAVEL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN
REPORT OF	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks approval for the adoption of the 'Places for People' strategy and sets out the ongoing work to develop the detailed network plans for the proposed active travel infrastructure plan.

The report supports delivery of the following themes in the Council Plan 2023-2027

- Working together to deliver people focussed regeneration
- Working together to protect our environment; and
- Working together to create safe, resilient and engaged communities.

This matter affects all wards within the borough.

This matter is a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATION

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the draft Places for People strategy as set out in Appendix 1.
2. Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to undertake public and stakeholder consultation to support the development of an Active Travel Infrastructure Plan.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The Places for People strategy will support safe and effective movement on the highway network within the wider context of sustainable economic growth and regeneration. The strategy will help to underpin the delivery of active travel within the borough.
- 1.2 The development of the strategy is critical to align with and support other Council priorities, strategies and plans to encourage and support sustainable economic growth and regeneration of the borough, including the emerging local plan, Birkenhead 2040 and the environment and climate emergency declaration. The ambitions for the local plan are to deliver a sustainable left bank of the Mersey which includes increased levels of journeys being undertaken by active modes as a key part of the vision.
- 1.3 The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority is developing the Local Transport Plan 4 for the region which will set out plans, policies and ambitions for transport services and transport investment in the Liverpool City Region until 2040. The council's Places for People strategy will be one of the documents to support the wider transport plan for the region.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Do nothing – this option is not considered appropriate as:
- failure to put measures in place to support modal shift would negatively impact the Council's regeneration plans, the emerging local plan and the environment and climate emergency declaration;
 - the number of households within Wirral that do not have access to a motor vehicle is above the national average and development of an active travel network supports to reducing social exclusion by enabling residents without access to a car to access opportunities such as education and employment by sustainable modes; and
 - following the release of Gear Change strategy and the establishment of Active Travel England the funding for transport to Local Authorities is required to include an element of active travel and authorities are graded on performance in this area.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In 2017 the Government published its first Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. The Strategy sets out the Government's ambition to make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys or as part of a longer journey. The strategy set out the requirement of local authorities to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).
- 3.2. The guidance indicated that the development of an LCWIP for authorities within a city region would be at the Combined Authority level. The Liverpool

City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) then developed an LCWIP for the city region based on desire lines that had been identified using tools released by the Department for Transport (DfT), such as the propensity to cycle tool (PCT) which identified approximately 30 strategic corridors.

- 3.3 Following the identification of the LCRCA LCWIP routes within the city region the importance of developing a cycle and walking network at a local level has increased following the release of Gear Change and Local Transport Note 1/20. This was supported through the introduction of Active Travel Fund during the pandemic and has continued with the establishment of Active Travel England which is the government's executive agency responsible for making walking, wheeling and cycling the preferred choice for people to get around.
- 3.4 The Department for Transport recently published the policy paper 'The Plan for Drivers' which sets out that *"walking, cycling and public transport are necessary in a multi-modal transport system, and we support their continued growth, but they are not the right choice for everyone's journey"*. The Places for People Strategy is set within the wider context of this understanding that not everyone wishes to or can walk or cycle but acknowledges that by providing the infrastructure for those who do also has wider benefits to people who wish or need to drive by reducing the overall number of motorised vehicles on the network.
- 3.5 The Places for People Strategy for Wirral, attached at Appendix 1 is one element of a wider framework of transport strategies to help the borough achieve the goals set out in the local transport plan. The Strategy provides a clear framework to manage active travel in Wirral within a wider context of placemaking, sustainable economic growth, urban regeneration and the environment and climate emergency declaration.
- 3.6 The 'Places for People' strategy sets out a clear vision as to how active travel can support the Council to create places where people and communities can flourish. By placing active travel users at the top of our road user hierarchy, in line with the updated highway code, there is the opportunity to transform how people experience local areas. The strategy is not anti-car, but the strategy does recognise that an overreliance on cars can have a detrimental impact on our environment, our health, and our economy.
- 3.7 The development of the Places for People strategy is supported by the development of an Active Travel Infrastructure Plan (ATIP) for the borough. The ATIP is the delivery part of the Places for People Strategy. It will show where infrastructure is needed, what type of infrastructure and priorities for delivering it. The ATIP will be a flexible, evolving document that responds to changes in policy, opportunities and demand. Together, the Places for People Strategy and ATIP will provide the framework for investment decisions.
- 3.8 The ATIP will be brought to a future meeting of this committee and will set out the detail of a comprehensive and cohesive active travel network setting out

the detail of the network of proposed routes to connect with existing infrastructure.

- 3.9 The ATIP will identify the active travel network across the Borough which will focus on connections between strategic destinations. This strategic network will focus on providing a comprehensive cycling network, as well as identify improvements to the walking infrastructure in parallel. The network will be developed based on desire lines, the desire lines will connect key destination points, for example employment sites or further education sites, within the borough with origin points, for example residential areas. The desire lines will be developed with supporting information from the Department for Transport Propensity to Cycle Tool (PCT), support from Active Travel England and Sustrans and information gained from engagement with key stakeholders. The work to develop the ATIP is ongoing and will be developed further through public and stakeholder consultation to take place early Summer 2024.
- 3.10 The ATIP will also progress a further detailed local network plan in Cloughton. Cloughton was identified as the next location for detailed work through a previous study undertaken by Sustrans as part of the Liveable Neighbourhoods Project (now known as 'By Ours Bebington', previously reported to this committee in June 2021, where various parts of the borough were scored on different aspects such as population density, car ownership levels, road safety statistics and internal and boundary road network layout. Cloughton was identified second in the overall ranking to Bebington, which is currently being progressed as part of the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme being led by Sustrans. This network development for Cloughton will focus on improving accessibility through identifying key routes and other complimentary interventions within and into the Cloughton, such as improvements to public realm, junctions and crossing points of side streets where appropriate.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The development of the Places for People Strategy sets the vision for the delivery of active travel within the borough and will be key to supporting future funding applications for delivery of active travel interventions. An adopted strategy will demonstrate the Council's commitment to active travel and future applications for funding are likely to be looked on more favourably with this commitment in place.
- 4.2 The government has indicated that the level of transport funding the Council will be able to draw upon will be linked to its ranking in the self-assessment process required to be undertaken by authorities by Active Travel England. The adoption of the Places for People Strategy will strengthen the position of the Council in this self-assessment.
- 4.3 £70,000 of grant funding has been secured from the Department for Transport Capability and Revenue Fund via the LCRCA to support the development of the strategy, the ATIP and the undertaking of public and stakeholder consultation in relation to the ATIP.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has statutory duties as defined by the Highways Act 1980, Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, Road Traffic Act 1988, Local Government Act 1972, and the Traffic Management Act 2004.
- 5.2 The adoption of the Places for People strategy and the development of an ATIP will support the Council in consideration of responses to future statutory consultation regarding the delivery of proposals in relation to active travel measures.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Existing staff resources, supplemented by external specialist resources as appropriate will be used to support the development and delivery of the Active Infrastructure Plan and consultation.
- 6.2 There are no immediate ICT or asset implications as a direct result of this report however it will have implications for highway assets in the delivery of the strategy going forward. Any proposals for delivery of active travel interventions would be subject to statutory consultation and further reports and decision making.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Failure or delay to adopt the Places for People strategy or develop the infrastructure plan will impact on the ability to implement measures which will improve safety for vulnerable road users, and therefore negatively impact on the safe and effective operation of the highway network.
- 7.2 Failure or delay to adopt or implement the Places for People strategy and infrastructure plan may impact on the ability to secure grant funding going forward.
- 7.3 Failure or delay to adopt and implement the Places for People strategy will impact on the ability to deliver against elements of the emerging Local Plan, Birkenhead 2040 and the Environment and Climate Emergency Declaration.
- 7.4 Individual measures in support of delivery of the Places for People strategy will be subject of future reports to this committee. Further details regarding risk will be included in those future reports. The management of these risks will be undertaken by the project manager and monitored via the Project Management Office.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Places for People Strategy has been subject to consultation at the Active Travel Members Working Group. It is considered to reflect feedback from consultations undertaken over the past few years to support the development of the emerging Local Plan, the Environment and Climate Emergency, the

Cool 2 Strategy, Birkenhead 2040 and various masterplans and regeneration projects.

8.2 This report seeks approval to undertake public and stakeholder consultation on the Active Travel Infrastructure Plan containing detailed network plans. This will be undertaken primarily using the Have your Say consultation portal however options will also be available for paper versions including in Easy Read format. In order to maximise input to the consultation it will also be promoted by:

- Targeted stakeholder and Elected Member emails offering meetings to discuss if required;
- Organic social media (shared across Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter));
- Media releases issued to local print and digital media;
- Wirral View news articles;
- Wirral Council Intranet articles (for internal staff);
- Residents' email – Wirral View and Environment and Climate Emergency;
- Staff email – Exec View (for Wirral Council employees);
- Ongoing engagement with the Active Travel Forum and Active Travel Members Working Group.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Council has an obligation under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality duty (Sect 149 2011) to show due regard to the duty and show due regard to mitigate any negative impacts that may affect people with protected characteristics under the Act.

9.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this project and is published here.

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impactassessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The development of the Places for People strategy provides an opportunity to ensure that the regeneration of Wirral supports the Cool 2 sustainability targets. The strategy has clear links to the environment and climate emergency declaration and switch from fossil fuel vehicles. An effective strategy will have a positive environmental and climate change impact through the encouragement and enablement of increased numbers of multi modal and active travel journeys.

10.2 The link between poor air quality, the climate emergency and emissions from vehicles is widely accepted. The Places for People strategy encourages modal shift away from the private motor car towards cleaner, more

sustainable modes of transport and can have a positive environmental and climate change impact.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Sustainable travel is at the heart of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and emerging Local Plan. In this context that development of the Places for People strategy is part of a wider sustainable economic regeneration programme to deliver a prosperous, inclusive economy to benefit local residents.
- 11.2 The strategy has the ability to support the delivery of measures that will improve access to key facilities for all. This would help improve deprived neighbourhoods where there the number of households without access to a car is higher than the national average.
- 11.3 Through any future procurement exercises undertaken in support of delivery of the strategy and infrastructure plan, the Council will be looking to maximise further social value activity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Places for People Strategy (draft)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee in accordance with section (k) of its Terms of Reference:

- (k) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners, and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to the above functions.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cool Wirral Strategy

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/files/cool2-strategy-2020.pdf/download?inline>

Developing a vision for Local Transport Plan 4 (LCRCA)

<https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LTP4-VISION090522.pdf>

CWIP Technical Guidance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908535/cycling-walking-infrastructure-technical-guidance-document.pdf

Plan for Drivers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-for-drivers/the-plan-for-drivers>

Propensity to Cycle Tool

<https://www.pct.bike/>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Liveable Neighbourhoods Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	8 June 2021
Liveable Neighbourhoods Economy Regeneration & Housing Committee Appendix 1 Area Selection Report	29 Sep 2021